



News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &
Thunder Basin National Grassland
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>

Contact: Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District, (970) 870-2299

Media Contact: Larry Sandoval, (307) 745-2420 or Aaron Voos, (307) 745-2323

Routt National Forest Offers Fern Permits and Extended Office Hours

(STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo.) May 27, 2014 – In an effort to accommodate visitors from out of town who want to collect Bracken Ferns, the Hahns Peak-Bears Ears Ranger District (HPBE) office will be open additional hours beginning Saturday, May 31. Office hours in Steamboat Springs will be from 8-10 a.m. on May 31, as well as the following two Saturdays on June 7 and 14.

Ferns are a forest product that may be collected throughout much of the Medicine Bow and Routt National Forests. Permits cost \$10 each and allow harvest of one bushel. A minimum purchase of two permits (\$20) is required at a time, with a maximum of five bushels per family harvested each year. More information can be found at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/mbrtb/FernPermits>.

Bracken Fern are also known as Fiddlehead Ferns, Gosari, and Fernbrake. They are considered an edible delicacy and can be prepared fresh, preserved by salting and pickling, or dried for later use. There is, however, a short time frame for harvest, as the plants must be picked before a certain maturity stage otherwise they are poisonous.

Many in search of ferns come from Colorado's Front Range and should be aware that weather conditions can change rapidly this time of year. While the harvest season typically begins around the middle of May, this year late-season snowfall has affected access and availability of plants in some areas. All Forest users are encouraged to be aware of the latest conditions before leaving home.

Ferns may be legally collected across most of the Forest, including popular areas around Dry Lake on Buffalo Pass and Ferndale on Rabbit Ears Pass. Picking is not allowed within 100 feet of campgrounds and picnic areas, as well as the Fish Creek Falls Recreation Area. Permit holders are reminded to be aware of private land boundaries to avoid trespassing.

Visitors to the Steamboat Springs area can get up to date information from the HPBE Ranger District by calling (970) 870-2299 or by stopping by the District Office at 925 Weiss Dr. in Steamboat Springs between normal office hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Information may also be found on this website, <http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>, or you can follow the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland on Twitter, **@MBRNFsTBNG**.

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